

A N
ESSAY
ON
GIBBING,
With a Project for its
Improvement.

Opus diu, multumq; desideratum

*Omne vaser vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
regit, et admissum circum Præcordia ludit,
solidus excusso Pectus lum fœdendere Naso.*

Perf.



DUBLIN:
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AN ESSAY, &c.



It is surprizing, that among the many curious and useful Papers publish'd in this prolifick Age, for the Reformation of Manners, the Acquisition of Conversation, Accomplishments, and all other Attainments that are necessary to make Men agreeable Companions, and heighten the Pleasures of Society, there has not yet appeared any Essay on the Art and Mystery of Gibing, nor any imperfect Sketches for its Improvement and Regulation.

And yet a Spirit of Humour, and Raillery seems to have taken Possession of all Orders, and Degrees of Men, it reigns in the Country, as well as the Town, and the illiterate as well as the wise profess themselves Members of this extensive Community, and claim the Privilege of exercising their Skill in this facetious Occupation.

That therefore I may contribute to the keeping up of this gay Disposition of my Countrymen, I design in the following Paper a Dissertation on the Nature, Usefulness, and Improvement of Gibing, and shew them the true Way of becoming Adepts in this MODISH ACCOMPLISHMENT.

And I hope I may without any Imputation of Vanity enter upon this Undertaking, when I assure my Readers, that my Remarks are the Result of hard Study, and profound Meditation, of grey Hairs, and long Experience, and collected from a diligent Observation of Men's different Humours,

Humours, Passions, Pleasures, and Pursuits, a continued Application to this Art, and a promiscuous Converse in the World, especially with some learned Doctors excellent in this Way.

I have no selfish Views in this Composition, it was conceived, and written for the Improvement of the present Generation, and that our remotest Posterity may reap Benefit from the ensuing Hints for the Production of Humour, and Facetiousness.

I should have otherwise acted more politickly, printed an Advertisement, and given a Specimen of my Design, applied to my Friends to procure Subscriptions, and declared my self a Party man to secure on one Side, Patrons, Presents, and a Reputation to my Performance.

I should have followed the Conduct of the Author who not long since obliged the World with an elaborate Treatise on a Sister Art; and insinuated at my weekly Club, that this Work of immense Erudition was digested, lick'd, par'd, and polish'd by my Friend *Jonathan* a great Dab at Joakes and Gibing.

Est enim Leporum disertus Pater, et facetiarum.

But as these are the Artifices of those who would force a Trade, and make a Penny of their Performances; so I esteem them Trifles below my Regard, Character, and Consideration, and I intend to leave the Success, and Credit of my Essay to stand, or fall, be applauded, or damned by the Merits, or Impertinence of the Composition.

Now Gibing, being the *Mot. de Ruelle*, a technical Term used by a polite Assembly to signify the Art of humorous Conversation, or Writing, may not be understood by those, who have not had the Happiness of being introduced into this Circle of *Belles Esprits*; it is necessary that I explain its Meaning and Nature, and give some Account of its mechanical Operation on the Humours and Affections of its Admirers.

It is not to be taken for Deriding, or Fooling, for Bantering, Bamboozelling, Drolling, or Joaking, or any low Species of Humour, or Buffoonry; but it must be understood to signify in this Essay, a specifick Essence extracted by Force, or Custom from each of these ludicrous Qualities,
which

which when attended with a Vastness and Fecundity of Invention, a good Memory, a happy Faculty of foreseeing Advantages, and enriched with the choicest Flowers of humane Learning, qualifies a Man to give a delicious Seasoning to the most insipid Conversation, some Drops of which subtile Spirit, by a fortuitous Concourse and lucky Disposition of the nervous Juices, penetrating into the Fibres of the Brain of some one, or more in a Company of *Belli Homunculi*, communicate a Gaiety to all by insensible Perspiration, occasion'd by rubbing and irritation, which heats and expands this salutary Elixir, and when the Operation is begun, the *Vis Comica* displays it self, and the Company grows bright by mutual Collisions of Wit. Men perceive an uncommon Briskness and Celerity given to their animal Spirits, and a lively Circulation to the whole Mass of Fluids, their Blood invigorated and mantling in their Veins, their Faces shining in humourous Postures, all splenetick Obstructions removed, and an universal Alacrity diffus'd over their whole animal OECONOMY, they improve each other by filing the Rust, rough Sides and Restiness of their Conduct; placing their Imperfections in the most ludicrous Points of Light, and give and take Lessons of Wisdom by putting each others Faults out of Countenance, draw Instruction from Mirth, and Morality from Laughter.

And this is the most pleasing Vehicle that humane Wisdom could invent for the administering the medicinal Doses of Philosophy, and curing the Corruptions of the Age, and makes more Profelytes to Virtue and polite Conduct than dry Harangues, and Common-Places of Morality. For it is a luscious Draught, and will be glibly swallowed, here is no grim Aspects and solemn Countenances to awe Men to comply with this Prescription, no Confinement to Rules, Formality of Diet, or Hours of Study, but an absolute Freedom from all Restraints, an Exemption from the Dogmaticalness of Schools and Colleges, the Pedantry and Pertness of Tutors, the Pride and Insolence of Rectors, and Sowerness of enthusiastick Teachers.

This Remedy is to be taken in fair Weather, for Rain and Fogs are great Enemies of Mirth and Humour, affect

the Heads, and Hearts of wits and make them dull, and splenetic, for they cannot speak sense but in Sunshine. But Art may supply the defect of our Clime, if we practice the College Custom of making Nights of bad Days by shutting the windows and correcting the Inclemencies of the Sky by Abundance of Lights, Liquor and Fire; for according to the gloominess or Serenity of the Weather the animal Spirits will be poor or rich, scarce or plenty, and the Gibing Humour will ebb or flow; the Company depressed with the Weight of its own dullness, sink into an insipid *Caput mortuum*; an Assembly of Stupids without Life, Motion or Merriment or elevated with sprightly Ebullitions of Wit, lucid Scenes of cheerfulness and Tides of uninterrupted Festivity.

The predominant Quality of this Gibing humour is saltiness, which frets whatever is deformed and disagreeable, and contrary to Decency and good Manners; and by its wonderful Stypticity dries up the filthiness and corruptions of Conversation, but preserves and brightens what is amiable and virtuous, genteel and polite and consistent with a judicious Management, of our Words and Actions.

It is from this property the wits of *Rome* borrowing from their *Gracian* Masters, called the pleasantries of their Conversation, *Sales*, as if they cured Men of their Foibles, and Imperfections by the poignancy of their facetious raileries, and seasoned them with a Philosophical Pickle as an Antidote against the taint of an indecent and Immoral Behaviour.

The ancient Philosophers practised this gay Way of Moralizing, as an excellent Expedient for exposing and reforming the Follies of Mankind; *Socrates* the great Father of Morality among the Heathen World, was so remarkable for the Exercise of this useful, and diverting Accomplishment; that he acquired the name of *εἰρων* the Gibe, from the Ironical Turn of his Conversation: And his whole Life, if we may believe *Quintilian*, was one continued Scene of Gibing and Banter, Irony and Irrision. *Aristotle* in his *Ethicks*, dignifies it with a place in his Catalogue of Virtues; and recommends its use when regulated by good Manners, and good Sense kept within due bounds, on proper Subjects, at proper Seasons, and becoming the Ears and Attention of good Men.

Perhaps

Perhaps some sullen *Enthusiasts* may alledge, that this *αὐτράτεια* of *Aristotle*, is one of the Vices condemned by *St. Paul*, from the Identity of the Ori inal Word; but it must be observed, that it is not used in the same Sense by both, the Apostle placing it in Company with *Fornication*, *Uncleanness*, *Filthiness* *foolish Talking*, shews the Jesting there must refer to the foregoing Vices, and signifies the smutty obscene and iurilous Discourse, the rotten and putrid jestings practiced by the Heathens as Incentives to Lust, and Lechery, and Forerunners of Fornication; by the Philosopher for a well regulated Facetiousness, the innocent Sallies of Wit and Humour, and the inoffensive Pleasantries of Conversation.

It's usefullness is acknowledged by the greatest Lights of the Ancient Church; there are extant some facetious Epistles of *St. Basil*, and *Gregory Nazianzen*, and it was customary with *St. Chrysostome* to gibe Men for their Immoralities, he addressed himself to Sinners by contrary Names, called the Drunkards, Water Drinkers, the Covetous, poor, the Oppressors, merciful, shaming them for their favourite Vices by such figurative Salutations; which manner of rebuking Vice it is probable he copied from *Elijah's* elegant and apposite Banter on the Prophets and Worshipers of *Baal*, the Prophet chusing to expose the Imaginary Divinity of their Idol by Gibe and Irony, rather than dry reasoning, and grave Argument.

And if we look into the Writings of some Illustrious Moderns, we shall find inimitable Examples of polite Gibing, and that they exceed and distance the Antients by a happy Proficiency in this Art, as much as they do the Moderns in some other Branches of Wit and Learning; and that they have raised to themselves Monuments of immortal Fame, by the profound Erudition, Elegance, Humour and Morality of their Compositions. Among many that I have heard and read, and that deserve applause, of *Irish* as well as *English* Growth; I cannot here but do justice to a late celebrated Discourse, wherein the Author in a new and surprizing Manner Gibed all orders and degrees of Men, the Nobility and Gentry, the Clergy and Long Robe, the Ladies and their Admirers; to the great Edification and Entertainment of the Audience; and acted well a Religious Comedy not in the least inconsistent

inconsistent with the Sacredness of the Place, gravity of the Subject, and dignity of his character.

Secuit Urbem et Genuinum fregit in illis.

Nor must the ludicrous Papers whether in Prose or Verse born last Spring be forgotten, being the Legitimate issue of some learned Doctors, in which a rich Vein of sprightly Invention, a sense of Religion and good Manners clear Reasoning and correct writing, are so conspicuous in every Period & shine in every Couplet, that the most squeamish Hypercritick has not yet discovered in them the least alloy of Dulness Scurrility, irreligion or Pedantry. For they were written with a Design of propogating religious Sentiments in this degenerate Age, and the Authors contrived that some Moral should lie couched in their Apologues, Truth in their Fictions, and useful Lessons of Instruction in their Gibes.

And they have furnished such a savory Entertainment to the Academy of *Humoristi* erected here, since the death of the Queen, that they have ordered their Secretary to lodge Copies of these valuable Pieces in their publick Library for the good of Posterity, and to give thanks to those worthy Gibemongers who have contributed to the carrying on of this gay Humour, and improved and made easie the Mystery of Gibing, and particularly to their Seconds who have obliged the Town with Elaborate Dissertations and finished Poems, as Episodes, to enliven the Readers of this Controversy, that they might digest the Crudities, and cherish the Poetick abortions of the teeming Disputants.

And here I cannot but observe; tho' I do it with the utmost Reluctance, because it throws the Stain, and Reproach of Dulness on the Whig Writers of this Country, who are only remarkable for an undefatigable Industry in composing and publishing Moral Casuistical, and Theological Tracts; that these momentous Lucubrations of Wit and Humour are the genuine Works, the inestimable Product, of the Learning and Leisure, the Prudence, Piety and Christian Graces of the reputed true Sons of our most Holy Church, staunch **ORTHODOX TORIES.** Which convinces me that they are the true Descendants of the Ancient *Genus, imitabile Vatum*, have as much light, dry, and Combustible Particles in their Composition, as their Walpish Ancestors; and like them kindle and flame, and rage upon the least Stir-
ling

ing and Provocation; thus ill conditioned Hirelings when disciplin'd for tripping with Whip and Spur, winch, and kick, and sneer, and snivel, and bespatter all about them.

— *For some Folks Temper suite,*

Like Bawd and Brandy with dispute.

But the Publick will reap this Advantage from this important Squable, that these Poetical Squibs, thrown about the Streets, with the real or romantick Names at their Tails, like certain Mathematical Instruments called Rattles, invented by *Archytas* the Philosopher, to divert Children from playing with Edge-Tools, amuse the Town and spend the Amunition of these volatile Gentlemen, which without this Consumption, would flame out to the infinite Disturbance of the Common Wealth, in factious Pamphlets, State Libels, or Tomes of Religious and Political Controversy.

Having explained the Nature and Philosophy of Gibing, and demonstrated its usefulness for the Reformation of Manners; I shall in the sequel of this Discourse make some Observations for its Improvement.

I am of Opinion that the real Parent of this valuable Accomplishment is a plentiful Table; for *Solomon* says *a Feast is for Laughter, and Wine for Merriment*, for good eating and drinking begets good Humour, and has a natural Efficacy to promote Cheerfulness; it dilates the Heart, opens the Countenance, gives Richness and activity to the animal Spirits, enlarges their Quantity, and spreads a Face of Gladness and Exultation over the whole Company; with this the learned and ignorant, the airy and dull, the Philosopher and Buffoon, the Giber and giber are at once affected, their Souls filled with gay Ideas, and turned to Wit and Humour. Men at that Season are least captious, and free from Resentments and ill Humour would appear as preposterous as an affected Negligence of Dress. Can a Man be morose or ill natur'd that has his Belly full of Beef, or dull that has his Spirits raised and invigorated with Claret and good Company? I take a good Entertainment to be the long sought for universal *Menstruum* of the *Chymists*, that by its surprising Qualities absorbs the Particles of Spleen, Malice and ill Nature, that are the Growth of humane Constitutions, changes Peevishness into Affability, Passion into Patience, and works Resentments into Reconciliations

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And if any seeming Uneasiness be discover'd at the Freedom of a Giber, the Company grows merry at the Expence of the Gibed, the higher the Resentment the greater is the Diversion, the Laugh, and the Wits, or as the *French* call them from their Occupation, the Laughters are against them, and the Gibe received with Honour and Applause for its Propriety, Elegance and Mordacity.

The vast Inundation of Humour that flows upon such Occasions, hurries the Company into Transports and oversets their Gaiety, a Silence, and a dead Calm ensues such Gusts of Meriment; but it is such a Depression, and ducking of the Spirits for some Minutes that makes them rise again with greater Force, Vigour, and Elasticity, and like a momentary Stupefaction of the Passions, gives Men a double Relish for their subsequent Gratifications.

An ingenious Naturalist of this City, but a great Admirer of the modern Refinements of the *Epicurean* System, and unhappily prepossess'd with a Notion, which the Practice of the Age has rivetted in his Mind; that Gentlemen came into this World only for their Diversion, that their Business in it, is to eat and drink, and drole, and laugh, and spin out their Days in a Circle of humorous Amusements, immortal Sensuality, and everlasting Idleness, has with great Expence contrived an Astesismometer to be placed in the dining Rooms of all Men of Fortune, by which, distant Friends in several Parts of this Kingdom, or in any Part of *Europe*, with a little Variation of the Index, may know their mutual Felicities from the Nature of their Entertainments. He having Mathematically demonstrated, that good Humour and Facetiousness holds an exact Proportion, and regularly rises, or falls according to the Elegance or Rusticity of the Dishes, the Plenty or Scarcity of Bottles, Variety of neat or adulterated Liquors, the Freedom or Formality, the Warmth or Coldness of the Reception, which will be of singular Use to every gibing Society, and heighten their Jollities like *Petronius's* Image at *Trimalchio's* Banquet, for it is but looking on this Instrument, and calculating the Festivities of their distant Friends, when their Mirth is run down, and Humour at a low Ebb, and they will immediately raise in themselves a noble Spi-

rit of Emulation, embrace the first trifling Incident or Harlequinnade that occurs to start a Laugh, and pursue the warm Scent with such Alacrity, 'till the whole Company flames into inextinguishable Transports of Merriment.

Now whether this dextrous and versatile Tribe of Men gild their Gibes with artful Panegyrics, play them off in apposite Tales, or in a mimic Alteration of the Lines of the Face, a humourous Disposition of the Eyes and Eyebrows, and scenical Motions of the Body, that the Humour, may if possible, be expressed by Action, it is the received Opinion, that no Exceptions are to be taken, the Gibes must dye as soon as born, be only heard, seen, admired and forgotten, and pass off with a Laugh, like Water thro' a Conduit, without infusing any Tincture of Spleen, or ill Nature into the Persons gibed.

But this I take to be a Mistake, and a fatal Obstacle to the Improvement of Gibing; for a tenacious local Memory is necessary to the carrying on this important Manufacture, it is the Storehouse in which is collected, and laid up all the Materials of this precious Ware, which are afterwards disposed, and retailed to the best Advantage at set or casual Entertainments; a Lawyer may as well want his Precedents, a Parson his Common-Place Book, as a Giber his Memory, for without a Recollection of former humourous Incidents, Blunders and Absurdities, his Mirth and Facetiousness will be as low, as the Humour of extemporary Harangues; so that Gibes must be laid up in the Memory, as the common Repository of Humour, and drawn out as Occasions offer, and preserved like Nest Eggs to set the Company a cackling and hatching again, and if the retentive Faculty should happen to be overstock'd with Materials, the superfluous Humour may be discharged in satyrical Diaries on the Eating, Drinking, Dress, Equipage, Dispositions and Studies of our Club, or Journals of the Conversation and Politicks of the *Pater Discubitus*, the Conduct of the Lady, her Airs, Vapours, fond Fits and partial Civilities for the Diversion of this gay Metropolis, and I humbly advise all Gibe Jobbers to take due Pains to cultivate their Memories by Art and Exercise, and that they would keep the Traces of old Gibes fresh in their Minds like Pictures in Oyl Colours, which they may do by thickening

ening the glutinous Contexture of the Brain, and moistening the dry Temperament, the Foundation of a sound Understanding, to which they have no Pretence, Wit being inconsistent with Wisdom: By this Means they will never want a Fund of Gibes, and the barren Fellows will have the Honour of being Fathers of a humourous Offspring, which will be speedily Midwifed into the World with all the Tokens of Maturity, by such worthy Operators as Pride, Peevishness, Malice and Retaliation, and the Town be diverted with Variety of premeditated Gibes, both in Prose and Verse, printed and written during the present Stagnation of Wit and Learning.

As sumptuous Living promotes, so an intense Application to Books, and Study destroys this facetious Disposition, for it exhales and consumes the animal Spirits, makes Men melancholly and modish, insipid and unsociable Companions, and transforms the merriest Wits into the greatest Coxcombs. The Fire and Flame of their bright Parts, like the Lamps they read by, gradually lessening, 'till it sinks into the Socket of Dullness and Stupidity, and at last with what are they rewarded for their Morning and Midnight Lucubrations, and a tedious Course of Pumping? Why truly, with a crazy Body, a cloudy Understanding and unpolish'd Behaviour; and I could produce Instances of old Academicks, but young Doctors of my Acquaintance, who by leading studious and solitary Lives, and being too conversant with Books and Scholarcraft, herding so much with the dead and so little with the living, have contracted such an Habit of Reservedness, Formality and Rusticity, that they never have been able to shake it off by the Advantages of Travel, Knowledge of Courts, and free Converse in the World, and acquire the *un air degagé* of well manner'd Gentlemen, but carry with them in Spite of Art and Affectation, a visible Academick Sheepishness in their Looks, Words, Actions and Address, and cannot, tho' willing, give into the Humours, Elegancies and Festivities of Conversation.

Besides the modern Race of Gibbers, perhaps the most learned of any Age, or Nation, are not very remarkable for a vast Stock of profound Erudition, an indefatigable Perusal of ancient Authors, and set not up for the distinguished *Coryphæus's* of solid, and substantial Knowledge. The Fountain
of

of Learning being situated on the Summit of a high Mountain, of a long, and laborious Ascent, these merry Gentlemen content themselves with playing, and sporting at the Bottom, and catching some falling Streams at a Distance, muddled by the Variety of Canals, and different Soils thro' which they pass without being at the Expence of Time, Money, and Sweat, that is necessary for climbing to the Top, and quenching their Thirst after Science with the clear, unpolluted Waters of the original Source.

But if Books are to be read for the Acquisition of Gibing, *Lucian*, *Rabelais*, and *Don of Mancha* are the Fathers I would recommend to the Study of all, who would make a Figure, and shine in humorous Conversation, or Writing, that they may if possible make themselves Masters of the rich Vein of Ridicule, that runs thro' those matchless and inimitable Compositions. Otherwise a superficial Acquaintance with Books, Title Pages, and Indexes, without dry, and tedious Researches thro' their Insides, is a sufficient Foundation for a Man to become a Professor of this Science; if the *vivida Vis Animi*, and Seeds of gibing be inbred, and the Growth of his Constitution, for it is an original Gift of Nature by which Men are mechanically, and irresistibly disposed to a particular humourous Way of thinking, speaking, acting, and which can never be attained by the Drudgery of reading, Multiplicity of thinking, or slavish Art of Imitation.

And we may without much *Metaphysicks* distinguish the nice, and delicate Touches of refin'd Raillery, from the coarse, and clumsy Gashes of rustick Scurrility, the ingenious Giber, from the insipid Jester, and natural Humorist, from the affected Buffoon. The meanest Giber of lowest Humour can apply the Terms *Punch*, and *Pig*, and *Parrot*, and *Spaniel*, to Persons possessed of the Qualities of those Creatures in an eminent Degree; but to draw the Pictures of *Buffoons*, *Pets*, *Pedants* and *Trencher Guests* in such just Proportions, and place them in so clear a Light, that they may be known at once, without such gross Appellations, and the World be able to decipher them by Intuition from their Features, Colouring and Resemblance of the Originals, is the Essence and Perfection of refin'd Gibing. Men of Sense are delighted, and the Ridiculous reformed with such pleasing

pleasing Strictures, and the Smart of the Operation passes unperceived, whilst our Thoughts are entertained with the Wit, Humour, and Politeness of the Gibes.

The *Romish* Caluists are of Opinion that this ludicrous Humour is a sure Note of heretical Pravity, because it is the Property and Possession of Wits, and the Wits of all Countries are generally supposed to have a warm Side to Atheism, for making free with Saints, and Shrines, Relics, and Indulgences, and ridiculing the consecrated Trumperies of their idolatrous Ware-houses. But the reformed System Makers carry not this Point so far, but allow the Use of a limited Gibing, and a moderate Run of Humour, have settled its Extent, and specified the Cases that are to be exempted from the Sport of facetious Tongues; it is true they have lessened the *Latitiae Materia* by the Strictness of their Definitions, and drawn the Circle of ludicrous Humour with a small Circumference, yet they have left Subjects of Derision enough for the gifted that Way to exercise their Talents on for Entertainment, and Instruction.

But Men of Latitude, and an extended Way of thinking are not contented to walk in leading Strings, and be fetter'd with the Institutions, and Trammels of Morality Writers, for any Confinement of their Thoughts, Words, or Actions is as disagreeable and grating as a Jail to their Bodies, and they think it an Infringement of their natural Rights, and a checking the Spirit of philosophical Liberty, to be debarred from exercising their Tongues, and Pens on all Subjects.

Now that their Conduct may be conformable to this Principle; they have demolish'd these scholastick Enclosures, and hewed down so wide a Gap, that all Manner of Gibes may pass and repass unconfined by any Obstacles from Religion, and Morality. For if Things and Persons, Dignities, and Functions of a sacred and serious Nature, and all wise, and worthy, and vertuous Actions are to be exempted from the Pleasantries of Humour, Wit, and Raillery, the gay World must bid adieu to Merriment and the Delicacies of Conversation. At what must the Arrows of the gibing Tribe be shot, when their common Butts are destroyed? The Chair of Humour must be deserted for Want of its ancient and modern Supporters, Irreligion, and Obscenity, and Possession resigned to the fell Enemies of Mirth, and Gaiety, sober Sadness, and stupid Gravity.

Besides the corrupt Part of Mankind is more strong, and numerous than the vertuous, and reserved, and it is an easy Thing to let off Gibes on Subjects of a sacred, and serious Nature, the placing them in ridiculous Lights is an Argument of sound Sense, and Penetration with the Multitude, and Authors are sure to meet with a due Reception, and Applause, for their double Tincture of Atheism, and Immorality, and sweet Sprinklings of seditious and treasonable Reflections, otherwise the Wit, and Humour so plentifully sown in the modern Compositions of this Kind would yield but a thin Crop of Credit, and Contributions, Booksellers would lose the Benefit of several Impressions, and Printers be broke without Presentments, and Proclamations.

It is commonly asserted, that Men of Humour who are given to drole, and Gibe are incapable of serious Business, and momentous Disquisitions, but the Experience of all Ages past as well as the present proves the Falsity of this Assertion; there are few Persons recorded in the *Gracian*, or *Roman* Story for great Abilities, and Dexterity in the Arts of Government, that did not at proper Seasons sink below their Stations, and Characters, condescend to be merry with the *Ludibria Vita*, and solace themselves with the Wit, and Festivities of humourous Companions, that they might recruit the Vigour of their Spirits spent by a too intense Application to State Affairs.

And whoever will be at the Pains to consult the second Book of *Macrobius*, will find a curious Collection of Gibes made by Emperours, Consuls, Senators, and Orators, which Sort of humourous Wit he calls *Literata Latitia*, et *Docta Cavillatio*, the ingenious Mirth and learned Scoffing of great Men. And will the sowe, and unfocieable be so hardy as to insinuatethat these Wits of Imperial and Senatorial Gravity, that fill'd the high Offices of State, were disqualified for serious Business, because they let themselves down to Humour and Gibes? Must a Man that wears a Fool's Cap an Evening for his own, and Companions Diversion, lose his Understanding, and commence Ideot his whole Life afterwards? If Arguments drawn from Examples are conclusive, the Stream of Antiquity runs in the Favour of Gibers, and confutes the vulgar Opinion.

Nor do the great Men of this Age, think it inconsistent with the Gravity of their Employments, or find in them.

selves any Indisposition to discharge their Functions from sacrificing to the Graces, and whetting their Genius with Humour, and Raillery ; they exercise their own Talents this Way in due Seasons, and are the Patrons, and Promoters of it in others, who pursue this Method of reforming the World whether by Writing, or Conversation.

Were not the immortal Works of the humourous *Addison*, who amidst the Hurry and Dispatch of Business found Leisure to gibe the Follies of Men, and Levities of Women, in a Set of diurnal Lucubrations, read, and approved by all Orders, and Degrees of Men ? And did they not divert, and amend the Age, whilst Tomes of Divinity, and Rheams of Sermons lay unregarded without Perusal, Influence, and Edification ?

In the Reign of King *James* the First, the Spirit of Punning possess'd the Pulpit ; and as History informs us the, the Preachers had numerous Congregations, and the People went away pleased and instructed ; and if our refined Clergy could be prevailed upon to introduce a humourous Manner of exposing Vice, and Gibing Errors and Immoralities with ludicrous Arguments, we shou'd soon see the blessed Effects of a speedy Reformation, Numbers would be brought to Church who saunter at Home, to hear such Notes of our sweet Singers, and swallow some Scruples of Conviction, and Morality, when steeped in Humour, and Irony. And if the Court, and City were edified a Century ago with Strings of Puns in Sermons, the lowest Species of Wit, what Improvement might we expect from the highest Flights of a sprightly Invention, and the most elegant Humour, and Poignancy that can be extracted from the Wit, and Learning of Mankind, interwove, and wrought up in the Inferences of Sermons, which might supply the Place of Politicks, especially if delivered with a musical Pronunciation, proper Gesture, and suitable Action ? Are not Dr. *South's* Sermons upon divine, and religious Subjects full of Wit, Humour, and Gibes ? Are his Arguments inconclusive, and his Motives to Persuasion less evident, because they are placed in a humourous, and diverting Light ? And if I may after so great a Man mention *Daniel Burges's* of merry Memory, what Crowds have I seen attending his Preachments, hanging about the Doors, and Windows of his Conventicle, when the Churches were thin, and empty, to
lick

lick up the Soul-saving Truths he uttered in sordid Drollery, and ridiculous Banter?

It gives me no small Pleasure that an adventurous Divine of this City, has attempted to preach in this humorous Way, I congratulate him on the Felicity of his Undertaking, and desire him only to drop his Strictures against the Government and Ministry, and turn the Edge of his Gibes against the Corruptions of the Age, lest the Mighty entangle him in his Talk, and give him the Honour of Martyrdom for blending Politicks with Divinity.

The bringing the Art of Gibing to Perfection is a Matter of such Consequence, and would so further the Reformation of the Minds, and Morals of Mankind, that I humbly conceive that it would not be unbecoming the Wisdom of the Legislature to take it into their most serious Consideration, and contrive some Ways and Means for its Encouragement. If a good Salary was appointed for the Endowment of a new Professorship in the University, and a Person of known Wit, Humour and Abilities placed in the Chair, and obliged to read Lectures on this Art, and print 'em by Subscription, and an annual Enquiry to be made into the Dispositions and Talents of under Graduates, their Genius's tryed with Exercises of Gibing, and the good old Custom of fresh Speeching revived, *Tripus's*, Prevaricators and *Terrasflinus's* encouraged, and a handsome Reward to be given to the worthiest Gibber and most distinguished Humourist, a rich Vein of Facetiousness, and ludicrous Humour would soon run thro' the whole Body of the Nation; we should recover this long lost Vertue of our *Runick* Ancestors, and have ready upon all Occasions a compleat Race of Gibers of our own Growth, to Grace the Court, Pulpit, Bar and Senate.

I only propose these few Hints to give an Opportunity to Men of Leisure, and Learning to employ their Thoughts, and Studies, their Applications, and Endeavours to carry this Matter further by their united Speculations, that they may dive into the Bottom of this momentous Subject, and oblige the World with the most probable Scheme for the Advancement, and Perfection of the most noble Art of Gibing.



F I N I S.

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